

CBT Chapters

- ✓ Assessments
- ✓ Developing Interview Questions
- ✓ Conducting the Interview
- ✓ Making a Selection
- ✓ Making an Offer
- Final Exam

Introduction

It's critical to hire the most qualified, best person for the job. If you've ever hired the wrong person, you know this to be true. Supervisors should approach the selection process with an open mind. Without an assessment process of candidates, selecting new staff members is a hit-or-miss affair.

There are various types of assessment tools (e.g., tests, exercises, interviews, etc.) You'll want to prepare your assessments before you begin interviewing candidates. Let's go over some assessment ideas.



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Pre-screening

Pre-screening candidates by phone or email before a face-to-face interview is recommended to help narrow the pool of candidates being interviewed by the hiring supervisor. Pre-screening can save you, the agency, and the candidate much time and can also eliminate candidates who are not serious or appropriate for the position. Recommended topics to be covered during pre-screening include

- Full description of job responsibilities, the work environment, and the candidate's continued interest
- Any degrees, licenses, or other KSAs as applicable
- Any pre-employment testing



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Pre-screening (continued)

Additional recommended topics to be covered during pre-screening include

- Salary requirements
- Benefits eligibility
- Pension system contribution rate
- Interview schedule and candidate's availability (Are they local or out of the area? Their availability to start.)
- Any outstanding questions based on the candidate's resume



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Other Types of Assessments

Additional examples of assessments include

- **Writing ability exercise** - Measures a candidate's writing skills by having them compose job-related documents such as memos, emails or letters.
- **Verbal problem analysis exercise** - Evaluates the candidate's ability to analyze some sort of work-related problem.
- **Presentation exercise** - Helps determine the candidate's presentation and speaking skills.
- **Role playing exercise** - Evaluates a candidate's ability to perform in a hypothetical job-related scenario.



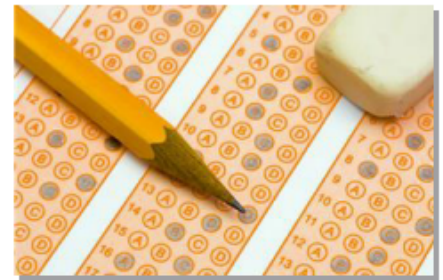
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Other Types of Assessments (continued)

Additional examples of assessments include

- **Written test** - Measures skills in reading, following directions, computing, analyzing, and/or communicating.
- **Microsoft Office knowledge test** - Measures proficiency in various Microsoft Office applications.
- **Interview** - Evaluates the candidate's knowledge, communication skills, and overall demeanor. Also used to discover information not detailed on the candidate's resume.



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Help with Assessments

For help developing appropriate assessments, consult with your agency Human Resources office. They may also recommend you consult with the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) Human Resources Division (HRD).

IMPORTANT: Other than the interview questions, all assessments (e.g., typing tests, knowledge tests) must be pre-approved by the ADOA HRD, Selection Manager unless an exception is granted.



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Chapter Summary: Assessments

In this chapter, you learned about pre-screening and different kinds of assessments. Next, let's learn how to write interview questions.

Remember to jot down questions as you progress through this course. Later you can ask your supervisor or Human Resources office to answer your questions.

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Developing Interview Questions

Isn't there a standard list of questions we should ask in an interview?



Sure, there are standardized questions and your Human Resources office can provide those to you. However, it's important to design effective questions that target the specific job for which you're hiring. The following pages cover writing guidelines to help you craft questions that yield the best results.

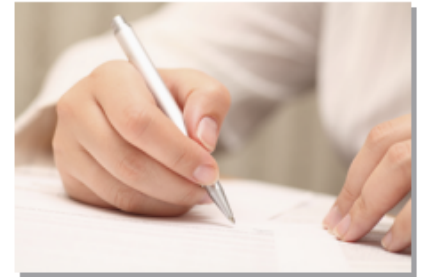
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Interview Question Guidelines

Keep questions open-ended - do not limit your questions to those that can be answered with just a "yes" or a "no." Open-ended questions allow the candidate to provide details about his/her experience. For example, "Tell me how you believe your work experience might contribute to your effective performance in this job."

Use some job-related hypothetical questions - questions that place the candidate in a hypothetical situation. For example, "How would you organize a team to identify cost-saving measures for each division in the agency?"



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Interview Question Guidelines (continued)

Use behavioral questions - questions that seek demonstrated examples of behavior from past experience and concentrate on job-related functions. For example, "Describe a time you had a conflict with a co-worker. How did you resolve it?"

Avoid leading questions - questions that hint at the answer the interviewer is seeking by the way it is phrased. For example, "We are an organization that believes the customer is always right. How do you feel about that?"



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Interview Question Guidelines (continued)

Studies show that open-ended, behavior-based questions yield the most honest, informative responses from candidates. The premise is that past job behaviors and performance can predict future job behaviors and performance. These types of questions require candidates to draw on past experience. For example, "Describe a time when you had to respond to an irate customer and tell us about the outcome." Determining how the candidate responded to similar situations in the past should predict how the candidate will respond in your work environment.



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Interview Question Guidelines (continued)

Rather than asking a candidate to self-assess (e.g., "How would you describe your interpersonal skills?"), ask a more effective question such as "Describe a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker, subordinate, or supervisor. How did you react to the situation and how was the situation resolved?"

[Click here for examples of behavior-based interview questions.](#)



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Interview Question Guidelines (continued)

When designing interview questions, keep in mind time and duration. Interview questions should be the same for all candidates, except if a candidate's response requires follow-up. A typical interview will last between 20 and 60 minutes and should contain about 10 to 15 questions. Ensure that questions developed do not require a skill that could only be learned on the job.

Questions should be worded so candidates clearly understand what's being asked. The use of acronyms, regional expressions, and technical jargon that the candidate would not understand should be avoided. Use job-related language and keep the questions succinct. Don't make it difficult for the candidates to understand what is being asked.



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Interview Question Guidelines (continued)

Listed below are important characteristics of good interview questions:

- Realistic
- To the point, brief, and unambiguous
- Complex enough to allow adequate demonstration of the ability being rated
- Formulated at the language level appropriate for the job; not laced with jargon
- Not dependent upon skills or policy that will be learned once the person is on the job



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Questions to Avoid

Interview questions should be job-related and cannot solicit information that employers are legally barred from considering in the hiring process. Hiring supervisors need to be aware of Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination against applicants on the basis of religion, national origin, race, marital status, parental status, age, disability, sex, political affiliation, criminal records, and other personal information such as financial/credit history.

[Click here for a list of discriminatory questions](#) that hiring supervisors are prohibited from asking along with examples of interview questions that hiring supervisors can ask.



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Rating Candidates

A decision must be made regarding the scoring system or rating scale to be used in the interview. The rating scale can be as simple as "acceptable" or "unacceptable," or it can be a three, four, or five-level, point-based scale. Rating scales that go beyond five levels are not as meaningful and consistent. The most critical element of the rating scale is not how many levels it has, but rather how those levels are defined.



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Chapter Summary: Developing Interview Questions

In this chapter, you learned about types of interview questions as well as guidelines for writing and asking questions. The next chapter discusses how to conduct the interview.

If questions arise as you go through this material, please take time to write them down and discuss them with your supervisor.

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Conducting the Interview

Although the one-on-one interview between a supervisor and candidate is used frequently, a panel interview combined with assessments and a solid reference checking process can provide a better basis for a selection decision. Keep in mind that for consistency and fairness, the same individuals on your panel must interview all candidates.

About panels -
how do I know
who should be
on a panel?



A typical interview panel is
made up of the hiring
supervisor and at least two
additional individuals familiar
with the position.

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The Interview Process

Sometimes, the hardest part of conducting an interview is staying on track. The following outline can help you in this process:

1. Establish rapport
 - Help the candidate relax with brief, casual conversation.
 - Maintain appropriate eye contact and listen to the candidate.
 - Introduce each member of the interview panel. (Collect application documents and references here or after the interview)
 - Describe the position or give the candidate a copy of the job requirements. Discuss the essential functions of the job.
 - Briefly describe the interview process: "We've scheduled 60 minutes for this interview. I/we will be asking you a series of questions. We will be taking notes during the interview so eye contact may be difficult."



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The Interview Process (continued)

2. Document the interview
 - Take summary notes for reliable recall.
 - Note behavior and body language, if relevant.
 - Wait until after the candidate has left to write down evaluative comments.
3. Begin asking the interview questions.
4. Allow the candidate to ask any questions.
5. Provide information about how and when the candidate will be informed of a decision.
6. Close the interview by thanking the candidate for his/her time and consideration.

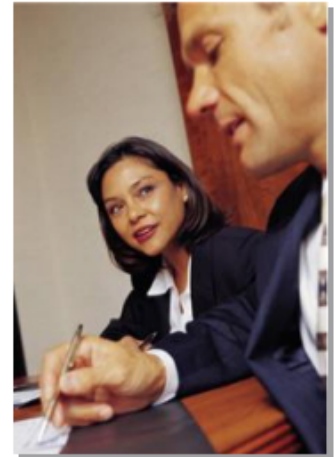


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Pacing the Interview

Give candidates enough time to ask and answer questions. It's important not to rush through the interview. At the same time, you can't afford to give each candidate an indefinite amount of time. A balance should be achieved. If you have determined your interview should last about 60 minutes, then ensure each candidate receives about the same amount of time. To account for interviews that go over your estimated time, it's recommended you place a buffer, for example 30 minutes, between interviews.



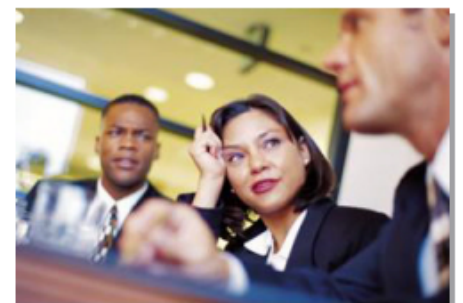
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Providing Feedback

As mentioned, the candidate most likely will have questions for you. You need to be ready to represent your agency in the best way possible and answer questions such as start date, second interviews, when a decision will be made, organizational structure, etc.

It's also important that you don't make any implied commitments until you have completed the entire selection process. Statements such as, "You're the best candidate we've spoken to so far" are not recommended.



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Stay Focused

If during the interview a candidate offers information that should not be used in the selection process, the interviewer should not ask further questions regarding the topic. For example, an applicant may state: "I want this job due to the hours. It will allow me to pick my kids up from daycare and still get home by 6 pm." This example reveals information (i.e., parental status) which cannot be used, or discussed, in an interview and selection process.



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Chapter Summary: Conducting the Interview

In this chapter, you learned how to conduct an interview. The next chapter discusses selecting the top candidate for the job.

Remember, ask your supervisor any questions you may have.

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Making a Selection

To begin, compare all the candidates. Evaluate their performance during the interview - were you able to see them "working" in the job? In other words, did they have the experience or the capacity to learn what will be required to perform successfully in the new position? Should there be a second interview? Were there two or three candidates who seemed equally qualified?

Now that you've conducted your interviews, you need to determine your top candidate.



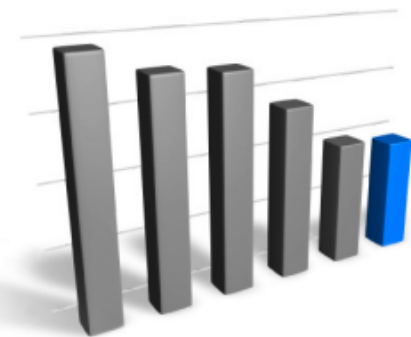
Reference checks - this is the last step in the selection process. If the candidate is a current State employee, be sure to review the employee's personnel file from his/her current agency and speak with the employee's supervisor or manager. We'll address reference checking in more detail a bit later in this course.

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Comparing Candidates

Too often supervisors settle for a candidate who really does not have the basic skills to perform at a high level. Be patient - it would be better to re-open a search than to hire someone who does not have the skills to perform the required function.



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Reference Checks

Let's say you've identified a "top talent" candidate and are prepared to make an offer. "Top talent" candidates are the people with the skills, work habits, knowledge, experience, and personal qualities that drive the employer to goal attainment.

Prior to making a job offer, a reference and background check must be conducted in order to verify education, work experience, applicable license or licenses and references provided by the candidate. Reference and background checks may be conducted by your Human Resources office or by the hiring supervisor - check with your agency Human Resources office for more information

Checking references and verifying credentials is often time consuming and frustrating because many employers refuse to offer more than dates of employment, salary history, and job title. However, even if all you are able to do is verify employment, this will at least confirm the validity of the credentials your candidate has presented.



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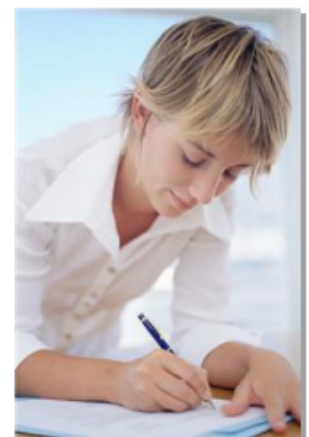
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Reference Checks (continued)

Prior to checking references, the candidate must fill out and sign the standard State job application form, which includes a release of liability for former employers that provide past employment related information. Also, there is a standard reference checking form for you to use which will guide you through the reference checking process.

Click below to see these forms.

[Application for Employment](#)
[Pre Employment Reference Check](#)



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Chapter Summary: Making a Selection

In this chapter, you learned how to select a top candidate. Next, let's explore how to make an offer.

This is an important part of the process. Remember to ask your supervisor questions you may have.

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Making an Offer

Once you've checked references and selected your top candidate, it's time to determine the starting salary. Most agencies require prior approval from agency management, budget officer and the Human Resources office prior to making an employment offer. You also need to be sure to check with your Human Resources office for specific guidelines for salary determination and the job offer procedure. The salary of a new hire must be made in accordance with procedures and guidelines established by the Arizona Department of Administration.

What if the candidate is a current State employee?



If the top candidate is a current State employee, your agency Human Resources office will be able to obtain critical information prior to making a job offer. For example, under certain circumstances, a current state employee may be entitled to retain his/her current salary.

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Determining a Starting Salary (continued)

The salary should be based on the candidate's experience, education and qualifications; market comparables for similar positions; internal equity among similar current employees in your agency; and your agency's budget. Your Human Resources office can be a great resource to help you compare internal and external equity and determine what starting salary you offer.



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Offer Confirmation Letter

Once the hiring supervisor receives approval to hire the top candidate, the candidate must be contacted and the job offer extended. This is usually conducted by phone and confirmed in writing with an offer confirmation letter. Job offers via email can also be used.

There is a standard offer confirmation letter for your use. The letter includes the candidate's acceptance, agreed upon start date and time, where to report, parking instructions and wage per (hour, pay period, or year). Additional paragraphs can be included, depending on the position: **covered** or **uncovered**, post-offer medical/physical exam, criminal/background check (agency specific), etc. Contact your Human Resources office for guidance on how to prepare your offer confirmation letter.

[Click here to view sample confirmation letter template](#)



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I-9 Verifications

Also included in the offer confirmation letter is information about I-9 verifications and what action the candidate is required to take prior to his/her start date. I-9s are documents that employers are required to complete with each new employee to verify that the employee is legally authorized to work in the United States. To comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Legal Arizona Workers Act of 2007, the State of Arizona is required to verify employment authorization in the United States. For more information about I-9 requirements and the candidate's responsibilities for I-9s, please contact your Human Resources office.



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Chapter Summary: Making an Offer

In this chapter, you learned how to determine starting salary and make an offer to your selected candidate.

The next section of this course is the final exam.

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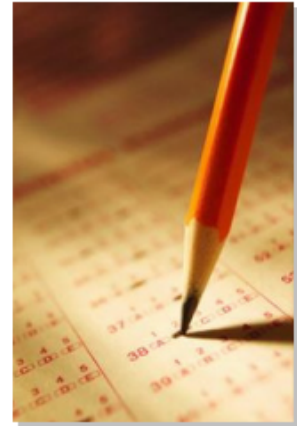
Final Exam

Assess
Your

Knowledge

This final examination is made up of 10 questions. You will need a minimum score of 70%, or 7 correct answers, to successfully pass this examination.

Click the Next button to proceed to the final examination.



Question 1

Assess
Your

Knowledge

True or False

Pre-screening can help narrow the pool of candidates.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Submit Answer

Your score is: 0% of 100%